



City of Seat Pleasant

Interim City Manager

July 12, 2021
City Manager Quarterly Report

Investigations

The city has been under scrutiny due to allegations of misconduct of members of the police department. Management recommended and the council has agreed per the advice of city attorneys to pursue an independent investigation into internal affairs as well as training and oversight of the Seat Pleasant Police Department. To date, the Prince George's Police Department has offered to assist in this endeavor as evidenced by a letter sent to the city manager from the State Attorney's office. Additionally, two other law enforcement agencies have been requested as to whether the agencies can conduct an independent investigation in a timely manner. These agencies include the Baltimore City Police Department and the Charles County Police Department. The council is expected to vote and approve one of the agencies to move forward with the independent investigation. It has been expressed that this investigation must be swift, but also thorough. While there is no guarantee how long the investigation will take, it is desired that it be concluded sooner rather than later.

USDA Close out and Project

The city is working towards the conclusion of the USDA project which includes the City Hall and EJD facilities. The closeout time frame is August 7, 2021. The city may have to file an extension for the final close out due to punch list items which still need to be completed by the construction contractor, and project change orders which need to be revised. Additionally, there have been some issues including repairs to both facilities which had to be corrected prior to fully opening the facilities.

Finance Department

The FY 2019 Audit has been completed and was determined to be a clean audit. The USDA and several other agencies including the Office of Legislative Services has received their official copy of this document including the Uniform Financial Report (UFR). The finance team is working diligently to complete the FY 2020 Audit which includes reconciliations of all bank accounts and payroll. The account manager has submitted for council review the year-to-date summaries of all expenditures.

Personnel Matters

Disciplinary measures have been implemented including verbal warnings, written reprimands, suspensions, and terminations in two departments including public safety and environmental justice. These disciplinary actions were taken due to violations against the policies within the Personnel Rules and Regulations Manual. In some cases, the violations are being considered for further review and investigation. Due to the

confidentiality of personnel matters, further specificity cannot be provided. Possible litigation involving personnel decisions is always a factor and must be considered in the release of information.

Environmental Justice

The department is waiting for responses to an RFP for street repair to the alley in the vicinity of 62nd Street and 62nd Place, Seat Pleasant, Maryland. The initial RFP had to be re-bid due to inconsistencies with the initial response. The city has the authority to accept or reject all bids.

Street sign replacement, curb painting, etc., are all on-going projects. Some delays have occurred due to non-accessibility in material requested from Prince George's County. As of this writing, additional employees have been hired to replace those who have separated from the city. As of July 18, 2021, the department should be fully staffed. Both the public works and waste management divisions have been working diligently to complete all tasks assigned including keeping the city clean including the abatement of property violations on vacant property. This effort is in coordination with the NCC (code enforcement division). Both departmental divisions are now working as one unit 5 days per week to ensure that priorities are met.

Public Safety

The department is in full operation with vehicular traffic enforcement on the Central Avenue Corridor. This enforcement is expected to significantly improve vehicular and pedestrian safety in the region.

The department is also working to continue the removal of illegal weapons and controlled dangerous substances in the city that typically is uncovered through routine traffic stops and saturation patrols. There has been an increase in carjackings and accidents with juveniles driving illegally through the city. Many crimes committed within the boundaries of the city are a result of arrests made from perpetrators passing through the city. The department continues to coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to control and resolve these issues.

Grants Division

The city has been awarded \$500,000 to build two single-family homes in the city to replace the burned property which was demolished on Foote Street and the vacant and abandoned property on 69th Place. The Grants Manager and consultant are currently working with companies to present potential designs of these homes.

The city was approved for a \$250,000 Bond Bill sponsored by the 24th Delegation. The Honorable Andrea Fletcher Harrison sponsored the bill. However, the delay in receiving the funds may have been the result of a group of citizens reporting to the Board of Public Works that the intent of the funding was for purposes other than what is contained in the application that the city submitted for approval.

It cannot be reiterated enough that any information regarding city activities must be verified through officials of the city. Delegate Harrison sent an email to the office of the city manager that she is looking into the cause of the delay and will report back once she has received an update. Additionally, members of the entire delegation including Senator Joanne Benson have been invited to the city to shed some light on how this confusion occurred.

The city submitted its application to the Board of Public Works for the approval for the city's capital improvement project (CIP). This application requires proof of expenditures for which the funds are to be used to reimburse the city. This funding was requested to help offset the cost overruns on the USDA City Hall and EJD Renovation Project. This delay or possible denial of the application is apparently based solely on the

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interference or concerns expressed by a citizens' group according to information received to date that is not yet verified. At any rate, the Board of Public Works is waiting for confirmation from the delegation to return this item to the agenda for consideration and approval. This is a serious set-back to the hard work of the management team and the grants division.

City Clerk's Office

The office continues to work diligently to work on business personal property tax invoicing and payments as well as all MPIA requests. Through the efforts of the City Clerk, the city is pursuing litigation for the lack of payment from businesses that are operating illegally without a city issued business license due to non-compliance.

The office is also coordinating with other management team members to update the audio and visual capabilities in the city council chambers, as well as to improve all functions of the city's live presentations of public meetings of the city council. The goal within the next few months is to get all prior meeting minutes and legislation adopted during the city's 90- year history submitted to the State Archives Department.

The office continues to keep up to date all legislation and is working towards the improvement of the city's website to ensure a user- friendly website where citizens and visitors can easily locate pertinent information. Code and Charter updates continues to be an on-going task for the Clerk's Office.

Another first and milestone was accomplished as the City Clerk was sworn in By Mayor Eugene Grant ad President pf the Maryland Municipal Clerk's Association (MMCA) during the MML Conference on June 29, 2021. City Clerk Dashaun Lanham is the first African American to hold this position and title.

Public Engagement

The department has been tasked with working towards obtaining cable stations for the city through its vendor subscriptions and franchise agreements with Comcast and Verizon. This is in-line with the department's mission to successfully engage the citizenry, keeping them well-informed with on-going activities, events, and critical information. The alert call system is being updated to include as many citizens as possible. The department will work with the staff assistant and EJD to ensure that the upcoming event scheduled for August 7, 2021, including a 90-year celebration and citizen community award component is successful with as much citizen participation as possible.

Office of the City Manager

The office has been contacted by PEPCO in reference the relocation of the equipment in the 5700 block of Martin Luther King Jr. Highway. This is a direct response the manager's request to Prince George's County Economic Development Office to assist with getting that equipment removed to enhance development along the MLK corridor.

There have been numerous consultations with the City's legal team concerning a host of issues. While the past few months have been challenging, the management team has been tenacious in its efforts working hard to improve quality of life issues including repairing the reputation of the city despite forces that continually work against these efforts. Evidence of this is recent partnerships that have been developed with critical agencies willing to work with the city despite negative press coverage.

The Community Housing Partners (CHP) have submitted a MOU to the City which is currently under review by the city attorney for revisions. There have been two drafts which have been reviewed and will be submitted to the City Council once the final revisions have been made. CHP is excited to have developed this MOU so that they can move forward with developing a mixed- use retail and residential development in the city.

The office has had several consultations with the State Attorney's Office and independent investigative teams to address the misconduct allegations. There are several steps that are in progress to ensure that nothing is overlooked.

The Human Resources Department has been diligent in working through personnel issues, including the scheduling and coordination of meeting after meeting to address internal disruptions and defiance. The department has worked with the office of the city manager to select an interview committee for the positions of Chief Operating Officer, City Manager, and EJD Director. The office of the city manager and the HR department met with the committee during the month to provide them with an orientation of the task to find the most qualified persons and thus make recommendations to the council as to the top two-three candidates for each position. They were provided the top 7 resumes for the CFO position. These initial interviews will occur both virtually and in-person during the next two weeks.

There are three committee members, each with their own unique experience working with municipal and County agencies with backgrounds as elected and appointed officials in the financial realm and day-to-day municipal management. The office of the city manager is appreciative of their willingness to volunteer and offer guidance as the city reaches its goal to acquire the best candidate for each position that is willing to put forth the work ethic that is expected.

Please note this report is a summary of the tangible work that is conducted daily for the city that is often not visible. It is not meant to be an exhaustive report, but one that only captures critical efforts of all staff. The respective departmental reports are included in BoardDocs for the Mayor and Council and are included on the city's website for future reference. Please take the time to review the critical elements detailed in each report.

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This concludes the July 2021 City Manager Report